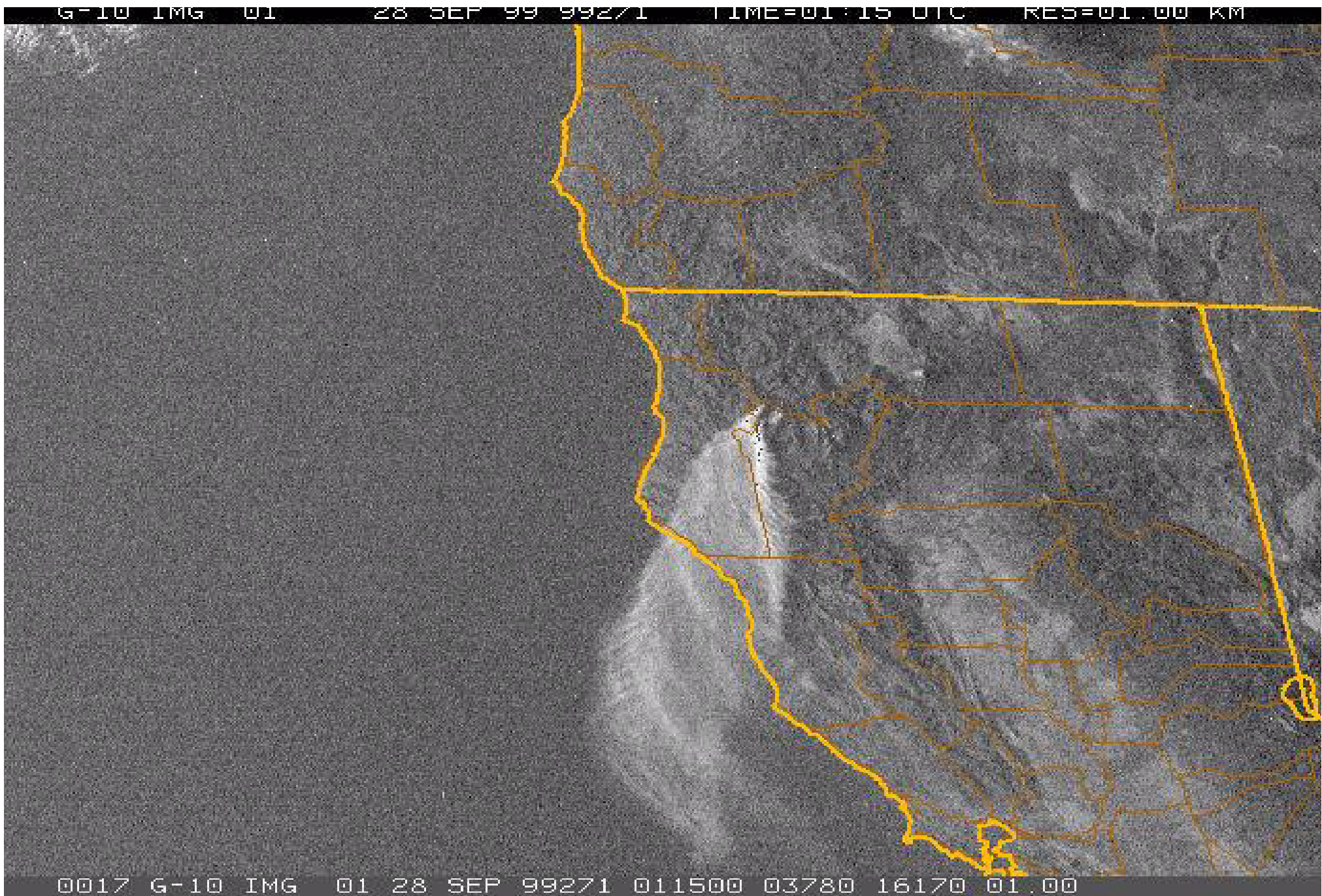


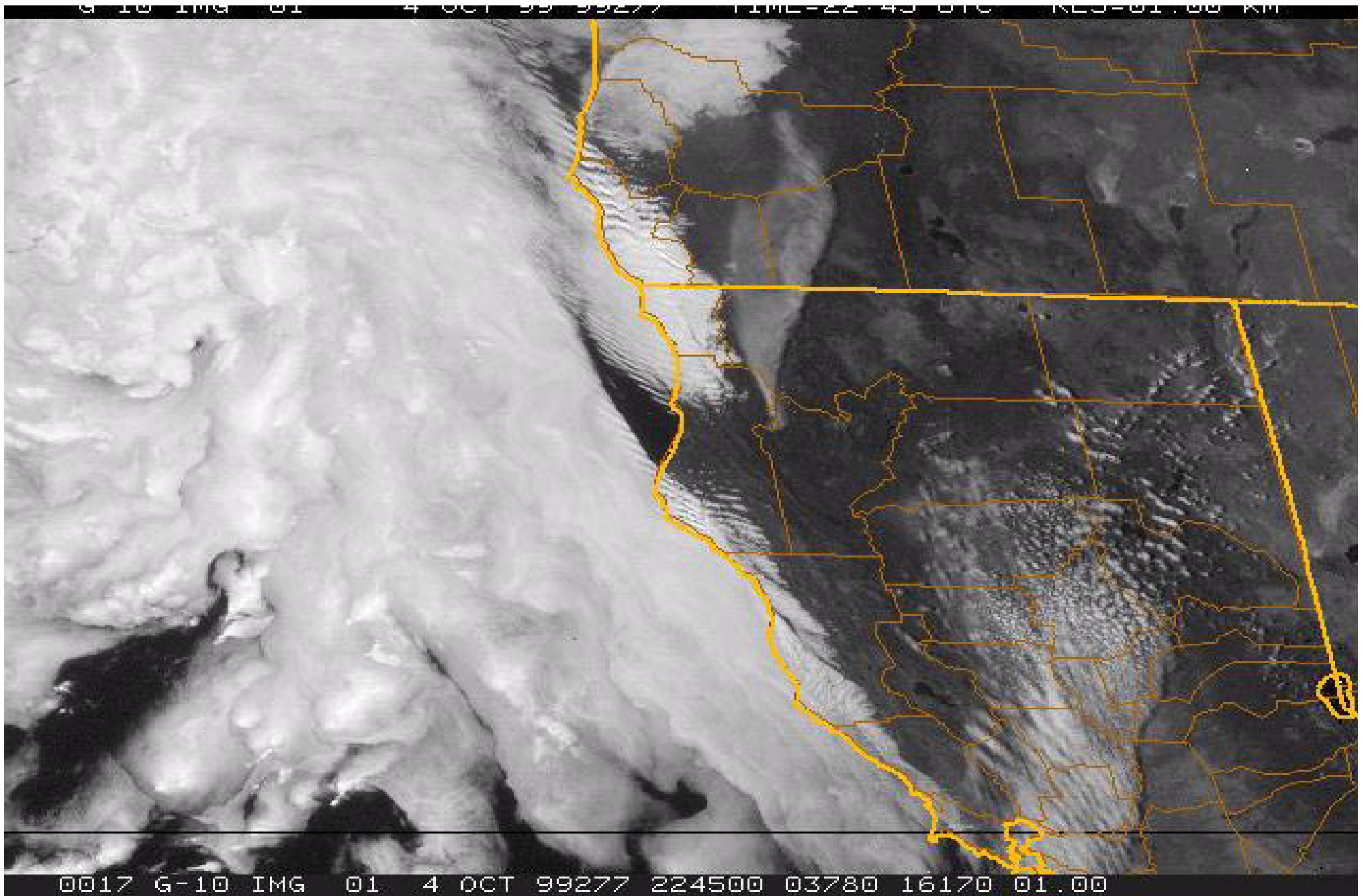


Big Bar Fire.





Satellite view of Big Bar fire. September 28, 1999 



Satellite view of Big Bar fire. October 4, 1999



Big Bar Fire

- ★ The ``Big Bar" fire, which started on August 23, 1999 as four separate lightning fires, in sparsely populated coastal mountains 240 miles north of San Francisco.
- ★ The fire burned 140,950 acres of timber and brush and covered most of Northern California with smoke.
- ★ The 24 hr PM10 levels were as high as 720 ug/m³ in late October. The fire (at the time) was 120,000 acres.



Big Bar Fire

- As of October 22, a state of emergency was declared by both the state and federal governments. Voluntary evacuations were in effect for the Hoopa Tribe and schools were closed.
- The local clinic was full of people with respiratory problems. HEPA filters and respirators were brought in for the clinic, government offices, and for residents who refused to leave.
- Relocation was even implemented for livestock and pets. Fire is put out in November, 71 days after a lightning storm sparked the first flames.



Handling Air Pollution Episodes

Lessons Learned from Big Bar Complex Wildfire

- ✖ There is very little information on what to do if an acute air pollution episode occurs. Need to have information ready before the next big fire season.
- ✖ Need to track and report smoke impacts as well as fire impacts.
- ✖ Hoopa Tribe requested EPA assistance.



Information Package Should Contain

Guidance on Issuing Air Quality Advisories

⚡ Six levels of air quality:

Good

Unhealthy for sensitive groups

Very unhealthy

Moderate

Unhealthy

Hazardous

Health Effects Information

- ⚡ There is no time to go into a research mode during an emergency. Have information **READY TO GO**.



Information Package Should Contain

Forecasting air quality from smoke

- ✦ Air quality technical expertise needed for forecasting smoke behavior and likely impacts. Best judgement required.
- ✦ Information should be made available to fire incident command and to the community.
- ✦ Have sensitive populations identified for notification.



Information Package Should Contain

Guidance on handling indoor air quality.

- ✦ The common advisory issued during a pollution episode is to stay indoors. However, the quality of air indoors became very bad during the hazard level episodes at Hoopa. 24 hr. PM10 levels as high as 600 mg/m³ in the high school gym. One-hour levels higher.



Information Package Should Contain

Guidance on making decisions on evacuations.

- ⚡ Evacuations are costly, stressful, and very disruptive.
- ⚡ Unsafe air quality levels need to be set for evacuations.
- ⚡ Use existing monitoring data if available. Hoopa Tribe had 2 PM10 sites. Portables also used.





Concern for firefighters safety
Fire camp in Hoopa Valley

Big Bar Fire.

